

February 6, 2015

JOINT COMMITTEE ON GENERAL LAW

**Re: H.B. No. 5347 AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF LATEX GLOVES
AT FOOD BUSINESSES**

Senator Leone, Representative Baram and other distinguished committee members,

Thank you for raising House Bill Number 5347 to prevent people who may be allergic to latex from coming into contact with latex without their knowledge.

I request you consider including medical, dental and emergency settings in addition to food preparation to stop using latex gloves and products. As you heard in the testimony given on January 27 at the Public Hearing, latex allergies are life-threatening to those who know and do not know they are allergic. In addition, more persons are becoming allergic to latex because of the high use of the product.


As a dental hygienist, I often plan and manage events that I work with the public such as health fairs and the Mason's CT Child Identification Program (CT CHIP). I have banned the use of the latex at our events, so that we do not have to exclude people from receiving dental screenings, preventives services at health fairs and Toothprinting and DNA Swabs for the child identification at the CTCHIP events because of possible or known latex allergies.

As stated in testimony, latex gloves are used in the handling of food, and some amount of the latex invariably lands on the food. In dental, medical and emergency care facilities or vehicles, latex is used for examinations including in the mouth that transmits the allergen just like food.

You heard first hand from Carolyn Mirek, who suffers from a severe latex allergy, was forced to give up her career as a dental hygienist because latex gloves began to give her life-threatening anaphylactic reactions. She was unaware that she had a latex allergy because it is not common to test for it.


Medical, dental and emergency facilities as well as food service, should not be putting their clients and customers in danger. They should also not be exposing their personnel to latex that may increase their chances in becoming allergic to latex.

I urge your support in the passage of this bill with the addition of health settings as well as for food preparation.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. I may be reached at 860-205-4105  860-205-4105 or maryb@ctoralhealth.org for further discussion.

Regards,

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